

# INTRODUCING STUDIES IN MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE SOURCES

## A STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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THE JOURNAL *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* was established in 1964 to provide a forum for scholarship falling outside the boundaries and constraints of other periodicals, with a particular interest in historiographical and interdisciplinary contributions. Under the stewardship successively of the University of Nebraska, the University of British Columbia, and the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, it was published in three series, and now begins a fourth series at the University of Lincoln in partnership with Arc Humanities Press.

For this fourth series of the journal, we have adopted a new title, *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Sources*, to reflect a new and we believe urgent purpose. While it is normal to find space reserved in Classics journals, as well as many European journals of history, philology, and allied disciplines such as epigraphy and papyrology, for the basic “nuts and bolts” scholarship of editing, translating, and commenting on sources, it has become increasingly rare in Anglophone periodicals devoted to the Middle Ages (broadly conceived). There are few obvious outlets, and no “central clearinghouse,” for publishing such work, with the consequence that in Anglophone academia, unless the source in question is of a size to sustain a monograph, it is normally exiled to the appendices of doctoral theses and other similarly inhospitable settings. This marginalizes what should be the very cornerstone of our discipline, while limiting access to lately discovered and reinterpreted materials for breaking new ground and forging new connections.

*Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Sources* seeks to stay true to the mission of its predecessors to be a home to scholarship falling outside the boundaries and constraints of other periodicals by redefining its purpose to be a venue for scholars to offer fresh readings of evidence from the centuries between 400 and 1600. We are dedicating our new series, in other words, to the fundamental scholarship of analysis and interpretation led by direct engagement with the sources—written, visual, or material—in any format,

from editions, translations, and commentaries to reports, notes, and reflections. By foregrounding the most basic approach of working outwards from the evidence, our journal aims to re-centre sources and source skills at the heart of our practice, foster conversations across disciplines, regions, and periods, and to be in time the reference for original approaches to and new discoveries of evidence.

## Lincoln Readings of Texts, Materials, and Contexts

The interpretation of historical sources, in whatever form and of whatever date, is at the root of the research not only of historians but also of archaeologists, linguists, and literary scholars, to say nothing of numismatists, onomastic specialists, and countless other disciplines. It is through analysis of sources—what we can and cannot learn from them—that we frame our knowledge and understanding of past peoples, cultures, and societies. The articles in *Lincoln Readings of Texts, Materials, and Contexts*, a special issue of *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Sources*, are all driven by a shared engagement with evidence, the building blocks of modern scholarship on the late antique, medieval, and Renaissance world. By returning to and asking basic questions of the sources, the essays presented here offer fresh approaches towards and new perspectives on matters ranging from Christological controversies and local Church councils in Late Antiquity to origin stories for the Greek alphabet and the exercise of power by local and national elites, to the curious phenomenon of trial by ordeal, a rare form of late medieval barn in Lincolnshire, and the wealth of material relating to the voyage of the Mayflower to America held in Lincoln cathedral. Their objective is to inspire and stimulate new debates and discoveries in turn.

The articles making up the first part of this issue, “Textual Strategies in Late Antiquity,” draw directly on the written record in the form of documents preserved amongst the proceedings of early ecclesiastical councils and a *scholion* on Dionysios of Thrace. As Michael Wuk reminds us, religious conformity and non-conformity were major concerns in the Christian world of Late Antiquity. Here he analyses the contents of a letter, dated August 7, 520, which was dispatched by the emperor Justin I (r. 518–527) to Hypatius, his *magister militum per Orientem*. The letter ordered an investigation into possible “heterodox” celebrations which had been reported in the northern Syrian bishopric of Cyrrhus. The offending festivities honoured Theodoret of Cyrrhus (423–ca. 460), its former bishop, a man whose writings remained at the heart of contemporary Christological controversies. Worryingly for the imperial authorities, these festivities, involving a procession and assembly,

not only imitated established ceremonials, but also implied a return to Cyrhus of support for theologies divergent to those agreed at Chalcedon in 451.

In their article, Marta Szada and Jamie Wood shift the focus to the emergence of provincial Church councils in the eastern Iberian Peninsula during the mid-sixth century, exemplified by a council held in Valencia for the province of Carthaginiensis in 546. The six conciliar acts cover the liturgy, Church property, episcopal vacancies, and ecclesiastical discipline. Situating these in the wider context of conciliar legislation across Hispania and Gaul during the sixth and seventh centuries, Szada and Wood highlight that, strikingly, five of the six canons decreed at Valencia focus on addressing and mitigating the practical procedural problems which could arise when a bishop died. This implies deep-seated concern on the part of the six prelates in attendance at the council to minimize local disruption by responding to recent events and finding appropriate legal remedies not only in conciliar precedents, but also in more general legislation.

Moving from these uses of texts and the textual record to the origin stories in circulation about writing itself, Giustina Monti examines a *scholion* on the grammarian Dionysios of Thrace dating from Late Antiquity. As she explores, this notation significantly transmits ancient debates around the identity of inventor of the Greek alphabet, which focused on the figures of Cadmus and Danaos, associated respectively with Phoenicia and Egypt. Monti argues that, ultimately, it was Herodotus who played a vital role in promoting the better-accepted story of Cadmus in the fifth century BCE, since it conveyed his personal, political distrust of the pro-Persian Phoenicians. Milesian writers, conversely, who took their name from their homeland of Miletus, “supported” Danaos in reflection of their historic ties to Egypt and their hostility to Persia.

The second part of this volume, “Records and the Practice of Power,” utilizes state records, charters, and letters from the high Middle Ages to illuminate the challenges faced by men and women of aristocratic and royal status in maintaining, extending, and articulating their authority. Robert Portass considers how the Mauduit family, some of whose members were chamberlains of the royal Exchequer of England in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, expanded their estates by acquiring properties from wealthier elements of the free peasantry in Rutland. Through detailed analysis of the transactions involving three successive Mauduits, he evaluates the strategies employed by this ambitious dynasty to gain new, good-quality, arable land, and to shore up their claims against local peasant proprietors. Yet as Portass makes clear, the activities of the Mauduits did not always find favour with those whose properties they aimed to acquire or encroach upon, and

local men and women launched counterclaims against them before the royal justices. William (IV) Mauduit also rebuffed a challenge from his own kin in the late 1240s, and this prompted him to bolster his rights over his estates against local free tenants.

The letters, charters, and seal of another officeholder with estates in the East Midlands, in this case Lady Nicholaa de la Haye (d. 1230), baroness of Brattleby, castellan of Lincoln, and sometime sheriff of Lincolnshire, are the focus of the second article in this section. Bringing together in a handlist for the first time thirty-two letters and charters which she issued, Louise Wilkinson is able to analyse their language and content, revealing how Nicholaa articulated and exercised her power and authority as a major regional lord, widow, and heiress through her written documents and the imagery employed on her seal. The witness lists of the charters are immensely valuable for identifying her followers, many of whom were La Haye family tenants, held lands locally, or received properties from her. Wilkinson shows that being a woman was no obstacle to Nicholaa maintaining and rewarding a significant group of men who buttressed her regional position in the First Barons' War (1215–1217) and the unsettled years of Henry III's minority.

The written expression of female power and authority is also the subject of Anaïs Waag in her article on the solemn royal documents issued by five women who occupied the throne of Jerusalem, in almost consecutive succession, between 1131 and 1228. Through detailed analysis of the diplomatic of seventy-eight royal charters issued by these queens and their kings consort, Waag traces subtle changes in language reflecting important shifts in how female royal rulership was voiced, understood, and exercised in the foremost of the Crusader states. Considering in turn the documentary record for each queen of Jerusalem, from Melisende (r. 1131–1153) to Isabella II (r. 1212–1228), she demonstrates that these women each experienced queenship individually. The inherent instability and exposure to external threat of the kingdom, especially after the Holy City itself was lost in 1187, may have eroded the active personal authority of the queen, thanks to the growing political prominence of successive kings consort from the reign of Sibylla onwards. Yet even the later queens of Jerusalem retained a degree of importance in the role of legitimizing the actions of their husbands in royal documents which carefully recorded their assent.

The third and final section of this issue, "Behind and Beyond the Written," comprises three articles on the intertwining of norms and records of practice, of photographic evidence and the recovery of now-lost buildings, and of printed books, persecution, and colonization. Graham Barrett utilizes extant legal manuscripts and charters from 711 to 1031 as a basis for trac-

ing the development of ordeal in early medieval Iberia. The much-debated law on trial by hot water, or “the ordeal of the cauldron,” occupies a marginal position in the oldest copies of the Visigothic code, implying that it did not originally form part of it. Assembling a casebook of charters from Asturias-León, Navarra, and Catalunya enables us to trace the practice of trial by hot water with little reference to its supposed legislative basis. The source of the rites constituting ordeal turns out to be the liturgy of baptismal exorcism, of which the guide to trial by hot and cold water in a manuscript copied at Barcelona in 1011 can provide an illustrative example. The law of ordeal is not of Visigothic origin, but emerged out of its liturgy and practice from the ninth century, and was then read back into the code to acquire the legitimacy of a Visigothic past.

Moving to the work of recovering architectural records, Mark Gardiner and Jenne Pape employ a series of photographs taken in 1966 to reconstruct a rare early example of a medieval timber-framed barn, which once stood at Ketsby House Farm in Lincolnshire, near the deserted village of Ketsby. Through a painstaking analysis of the visual material, Gardiner and Pape set out how this barn was an aisled base-cruck building, and probably built between 1275 and 1350 for a minor local lord on his demesne. Architectural features—the lack of internal divisions, the size of the building, and the absence of any evidence for internal fires—combine to suggest that it was intended for use as a barn from the outset of its existence. The barn was built from low-grade timber derived from hedgerow trees, and shows economies in its construction techniques, both of which, Gardiner and Pape argue, likely reflected a scarcity of construction timber in the area, mirroring the poor quality of other late medieval buildings in Lincolnshire.

Finally, Anna Marie Roos introduces a remarkable but neglected collection of materials relating to the voyage of the *Mayflower* in 1620 held by Lincoln cathedral. These works were amassed by Michael Honywood, dean of Lincoln from 1660 to 1681, and housed for centuries within the Wren Library, which he himself commissioned. His time as a royalist in exile from 1643 to 1660 at Leiden and Utrecht, both important Netherlands centres for printing, allowed him to gather books and pamphlets relating to the *Mayflower*, which delivered the Pilgrims to new lives in the New World (America). Roos catalogues here the key works in the Honywood collection, providing tantalizing glimpses of separatist tracts printed in exile in Holland, works produced by the clandestine Pilgrim press at Leiden, the *Sea Grammar* of John Smith, a famed contemporary navigator who mapped the American coast, medical texts, writings on the Native Americans, supplies lists for later English settlers, and the first Bible printed in the New World, trans-

lated into the Massachusetts Algonquin language. With her call for future study and further analysis of these materials, Roos provides a fitting conclusion to a volume which celebrates the potential of medieval and Renaissance sources, the rich golden veins of our research.